

1. A method for establishing voice communications between an operator and an agent, the operator being associated with a computer and a telephone, the method comprising the steps of:

5 entering a call request by the operator in the computer for the agent to call the operator;

transmitting the call request from the computer over a computer network to a telephone switching system; and

establishing voice communications between the agent and the operator through the telephone switching system.

2. The method as recited in claim 1 wherein the step of establishing voice communications comprises the step of automatically dialing the telephone associated with the operator by the telephone switching system based on the call request.

3. The method as recited in claim 2 wherein the step of transmitting the call request comprises the step of transmitting the call request from the computer over the Internet.

4. The method as recited in claim 2 wherein the step of automatically dialing the telephone comprises the steps of:

receiving the call request at a telephone computer associated with the agent; and

5 automatically dialing the telephone by the telephone computer based on the call request.

5. The method as recited in claim 4 comprising the step of automatically connecting the agent to the telephone after dialing the telephone.

6. The method as recited in claim 5 wherein the step of automatically connecting the agent comprises the steps of:

determining when the operator answers the telephone; and

5 automatically connecting the agent to the telephone when the operator answers the telephone.

7. The method as recited in claim 2 wherein the step of entering the call request comprises the step of

entering a telephone number of the telephone associated with the operator; and

5 wherein the step of automatically dialing the telephone comprises the step of dialing the telephone number.

8. The method as recited in claim 2 wherein the step of entering the call request comprises the step of

entering a time to call the operator; and

5 wherein the step of automatically dialing the telephone comprises the step of

automatically dialing the telephone at the time to call.

9. The method as recited in claim 2 wherein the step of entering the call request comprises the step of entering a name of the operator; and

wherein the method comprises the step of

5 indicating to the agent the name of the operator before establishing voice communications between the agent and the operator.

10. The method as recited in claim 2 wherein the step of automatically dialing the telephone comprises the steps of:

sending a dial request command from a telephone computer to an automatic call distributor associated with the agent; and

5 automatically dialing the telephone by the automatic call distributor in response to the dial request command.

11. The method as recited in claim 10 wherein the step of automatically connecting the agent comprises the steps of:

determining when the operator answers the telephone; and

5 automatically connecting the agent to the telephone when the operator answers the telephone.

12. A method for establishing voice communications between an operator and an agent, the operator being associated with a computer and a telephone, the method comprising the steps of:

5 entering a call request by the operator in the computer for the agent to call the operator, the call request including a telephone number of the telephone associated with the operator;

transmitting the call request from the computer over a computer network to a telephone switching system;

10 automatically dialing the telephone associated with the operator by the telephone switching system based on the telephone number in the call request; and

automatically connecting the agent to the telephone.

13. The method as recited in claim 12 wherein the step of transmitting the call request comprises the step of transmitting the call request from the computer over the Internet to the telephone switching system.

14. The method as recited in claim 12 wherein the step of automatically dialing the telephone comprises the steps of:

receiving the call request at a telephone computer associated with the agent; and

5 automatically dialing the telephone by the telephone computer based on the call request.

15. The method as recited in claim 14 wherein the step of automatically connecting the agent comprises the steps of:

determining when the operator answers the telephone; and

5 automatically connecting the agent to the telephone when the operator answers the telephone.

16. The method as recited in claim 15 wherein the step of entering the call request comprises the step of
entering a telephone number of the telephone associated with the operator; and

5 wherein the step of automatically dialing the telephone comprises the step of dialing the telephone number.

17. The method as recited in claim 16 wherein the step of entering the call request comprises the step of

entering a time to call the operator; and

5 wherein the step of automatically dialing the telephone comprises the step of
automatically dialing the telephone at the time to call.

18. The method as recited in claim 18 wherein the step of entering the call request comprises the step of entering a name of the operator; and

5 wherein the method comprises the step of

indicating the name of the operator to the agent before automatically connecting the agent to the telephone.

19. The method as recited in claim 12 wherein the step of automatically dialing the telephone comprises the steps of:

5 sending a dial request command from a telephone computer to an automatic call distributor associated with the agent; and

automatically dialing the telephone by the automatic call distributor in response to the dial request command.

20. The method as recited in claim 19 wherein the step of automatically connecting the agent comprises the steps of:

determining when the operator answers the telephone; and

5 automatically connecting the agent to the telephone when the operator answers the telephone.

21. A communications system for establishing voice communications between an operator and an agent, the operator being associated with an operator telephone and entering a call request into a computer, the communications system comprising:

5 an agent telephone associated with the agent; and
 a telephone switching system for receiving the call request from the computer, for dialing the operator telephone and for interconnecting the agent telephone and the operator telephone.

22. The communications system as recited in claim 21 wherein the telephone switching system comprises:

 a telephone computer for receiving the call request from the computer; and

5 an automatic call distributor for automatically dialing the operator telephone in response to the telephone computer and for interconnecting the agent telephone and the operator telephone.

23. The communications system as recited in claim 22 wherein the automatic call distributor comprises

 answer means for detecting when the operator answers the operator telephone, and

5 wherein the automatic call distributor connects the agent to the operator telephone when the operator answers the operator telephone.

24. The communications system as recited in claim 22 wherein the call request includes a time to call the operator and, wherein the telephone computer comprises:

 time means for detecting the time to call the operator from the call request; and

 dial means responsive to the time means for prompting the automatic call distributor to call the operator telephone at the time to call.